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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR RICE MEETS WITH SRI LANKA PR PALIHAKKARA

Classified By: AMBASSADOR SUSAN RICE, FOR REASONS 1.4 B/D

11. (C) Summary: During a February 26 meeting with Sri Lankan PR Palihakkara, Ambassador Rice urged his government to grant NGOs and USAID complete and full access to civilians in IDP camps. Palihakkara acknowledged that "there had been a problem," and said the visit of UN U/SYG for Humanitarian Affairs John Holmes had been very useful in increasing access. The Sri Lankan PR also raised the Durban Review Conference, and asked that the U.S. continue to remain engaged. Ambassador Rice outlined recent steps culminating with a U.S. decision to no longer participate in negotiations based on the current outcome document. However, she said the U.S. was open to reengaging if a much shorter, non-country specific document replaced the current version. Palihakkara also raised Sri Lanka's chairmanship of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and the NPT. End summary.

THE CONFLICT IN SRI LANKA

12. (C) Palihakkara reviewed the conflict between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE, and concluded by saying that Sri Lanka did not have a problem with an informal, discrete Security Council briefing on the current situation by U/SYG Holmes. Ambassador Rice said this was a "constructive development" and encouraged the Sri Lankan government to grant NGOs and USAID complete and full access to IDPs and other civilians caught between the military and the LTTE. Palihakkara acknowledged that there had been a problem with access, but the visit of Holmes to Sri Lanka had resulted in substantial progress, and that currently the "system is being worked out." Referring to the recent shoot down of a LTTE aircraft over the capital, Palihakkara said the LTTE wanted to show the Sri Lankan diaspora that they were still militarily relevant. He added that the Sri Lankan military discovered submersible devices, and does not discount the possibility that the LTTE may still have one or two planes hidden away. Palihakkara complimented U.S. engagement in Sri Lanka, and said Sri Lanka agreed to a discrete briefing in the Security Council because they had nothing to hide.

DURBAN

13. (C) Palihakkara urged that the U.S. continue to engage in the Durban Review Conference and said the document under discussion was a "silly piece of paper." He believed that the problems in Geneva "are more apparent than real." Ambassador Rice reviewed the U.S. position on the Durban Review Conference, and said the sending of a high-level delegation to Geneva represented the fulfillment of President Obama's promise. Unfortunately, the outcome document went from "bad to worse" and therefore the U.S. will no longer participate in discussions on this draft. However, the U.S. will remain open to further evolutions in the situation; if the current document is scrapped for a much shorter one with no references to specific countries or conflicts, no

references to the false concept of defamation of religion, and a reference to reparations that does not exceed that of the first Durban Conference, the U.S. would be willing to reengage. She added, however, that time was pressing and that an alternative needed to come together quickly if there was any hope for the U.S. to participate. Palihakkara said he would see if Sri Lanka can help, but agreed that time was pressing.

ISRAEL PRACTICES COMMITTEE/NPT

14. (C) At the end of the meeting, Palihakkara noted that Sri Lanka chaired the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories. He understood U.S. objections to this committee, but said he was trying to be very moderate and was consulting with the Israeli Mission. He believed Arab countries were more moderate than they used to be. Palihakkara also raised the NPT 2010 Review and said that it wasn't looking good. Ambassador Rice said the U.S. would work to help improve the NPT 2010 Review process.
Rice